THE SERPENT'S TAIL

SPRING, 1990

with

Special Beltane Supplement

as the light
of dawn
rises again,
may you stir
with the
earth
upon her
awakening

welcome the spring!

A seasonal Journal to carry us through the transition. Join the Earthdwellers, Mythmakers and Transformation Dancers!

The Serpent is an ancient symbol that has been revered by many cultures from China to India to native North America. It respresents the image of the life force in the field of space and time, continually throwing off death and being reborn. As the snake sheds its skin to be born again, so too does life shed its generations one after the other and create new ones. The serpent is in the form of a circle eating its own tail, as does life live by killing and eating of itself, dying and rebirthing, like the moon casts its shadow to become full again. The serpent thus is a respresentation of the primal mystery and paradox of life.

The ancients recognized that the Earth had various energy lines and nodule points very much like our own nervous system. These were perceived as winged serpent or dragon tracks which carried power from one place to the other just like our neurons transmit electrical currents from one synapse to the next. These so-called "ley lines" were traced across the continent from the dolmens of the ancient Celts in Britanny and Ireland (where mysterious "circles" are suddenly appearing today) to the Great Serpent Mound in Ohio to the Dragon vein processions in Asia.

We once again recognize the connections between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between our bodies and the Earthbody so that we can try to keep in harmony with the Earth as Gaia, as Mother Goddess, as a serpent force; a whole living organism with her delicate balance between Life and Death.

MISSION STATEMENT

"Seasons" is a collective that publishes The Serpent's Tail, a quarterly journal that has been conceived to disseminate information on planetary consciousness, the reverance of Natural Laws and advocates a wholistic and balanced approach to all things. We believe that human beings are not meant to take "Dominion of the Earth" as written in the Bible, but are a part of the Great Web of Life in which all creatures are interdependent. Of imminent importance is the preservation of our planet, of Earthmother, for it is Her body that sustains us. We are endangering our planet and therefore ourselves through overpopulation, the burning of fossil fuels and other consequences of the Industrial Revolution. The forces that have driven the modern industrial world will have to reckon with the "life out of balance" (Koyaanisqatsi) they have created. Prometheus's act of stealing fire caused him to be condemned by the Gods for upsetting the natural order. Let us not be condemned for the same reason.

The segment of American society that engages in vast mass-produced media-perpetuated consumerism and waste with no regard to its consequences will reap the effect of its actions. The value of people is not determined by the amount or expense of accumulated inanimate objects as our American consumo-robot culture teaches us. Let us join those who practice the values of community, family and soul.

In order for a change in outside manifestation to take place, there first must be a change of consciousness within. The greatest is reflected in the smallest and vice versa. We are on the path in search for new explanations to the age-old Great Mysteries. Science is changing our Creation Myths and the Old Man has been blown from the sky. We therefore are asking our readers to help rewrite the old myths that no longer reflect the "Zeitgeist" that we live in and create the mythology that will determine the New Aeon as we enter the turning of the Millenium.

EDITORIAL POLICY

We encourage our readers to make any contributions to the Journal such as letters or articles if you wish to do so. Please see our more detailed advertisement for contributors on the inside back cover. Our next issue will be out at the Summer Solstice, June 21st, 1990. The deadline the submissions is May 21st, 1990. Please send any copies of articles, poems, etc. and a self-addressed-stamped envelope. We will send you a release form allowing us to print your article and make any grammatical corrections necessary. Please send your materials to:

The Serpent's Tail, c/o Seasons, 515 E. Homer Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

EARTH DAY

Where were you on Wednesday, April 22, 1970? Perhaps you were in school, listening to your geometry teacher explain hypotenuses and parallelograms, or maybe in college, or maybe you were busy working at your job or at home with "chores". That date, of course was the first official celebration of Earth Day. For the higher-ups to formally designate a particular day in spring as "Earth Day" may seem redundant or even silly to those of us for which every day is earth day. But as an educative tool, massive Earth Day events are quite effective in increasing the public´s awareness of environmental issues.

Earth Day 1990, which will again be celebrated on Sunday, April 22, is the event´s twentieth anniversary, and will be the largest Earth Day celebration our city has ever hosted. The Milwaukee Earth Day Coalition, which is organizing the festival, expects between 5,000 to 10,000 participants. Admission is free and all events will be held at Central Park (2401 West Wisconsin Avenue) and in buildings immediately adjacent to the park. The festival officially begins at 1:00, when the parade will begin its march down Wisconsin Avenue (everyone is highly encouraged to join in with their own creation).

In addition to musical and theatrical entertainment, the day-long event will feature a diverse selection of workshops, speakers, participatory children´s activities, and earthy cuisine. Among the featured speakers is Alex Cockburn, radical social critic, lecturer, and author of Corruptions of Empire and The Fate of the Forest. Mr. Cockburn has been a columnist with The Village Voice, The Nation, and In These Times. His presentation will focus on the connection between economic practices and the environment. Other speakers include Dr. Al Gedick on the copper mining controversy in northern Wisconsin, and the hosts of the T.V. show "Outdoor Wisconsin", Nancy Frank and Dan Small. Joel McNally of The Milwaukee Journal will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Musical entertainment will include an assortemnt of folk, jazz, and rock bands. A sampling of these entertainers include Blackhawk, a Native American folk musician; Leroy Airmaster, local blues band; and Black Star Reggae, a Madison reggae band. Theatre groups such as Dance Circus and Madison´s Broom Street Theatre will also perform.

A total of 75 to 100 booths have been set aside for artists and various organizations, schools, and small businesses. Workshops vary widely, with topics ranging from housing, racism, employment and peace issues, to recycling, the Bovine Growth Hormone controversy, waste incinerators, organic farming and nuclear power. It´s really impossible to list all that is available!

Organizers of Earth Day 1990 are sponsoring a number of fund-raising events such as a Bike-A-Thon on April 14 and a Holly Near/Claudia Schmidt Concert at the Pabst Theater on April 23. Also, in conjunction with the festival, the Mitchell Park Domes will also be hosting its own Earth Day activities. The Milwaukee County Transit System will provide free shuttle bus service between the two sites and possibly a third site at the lakefront, where a "Kite-In" will be held at 10:00 a.m. for kite lovers of all ages.

The Milwaukee Earth Day Coalition, which is comprised almost totally of volunteers, hopes to involve as many multi-cultural and community groups as possible, not just for Earth Day 1990, but afterwards as well to work toward common goals of peaceful and non-toxic living. This number has grown by leaps and bounds. Some of these groups include the Inner City Arts Council, Milwaukee Montessori School, the Girl Scouts, and Citizens for a Better Environment.

What happened twenty years ago on Earth Day? Senator Gaylord Nelson, who was the official originator of "Earth Day", spoke to an audience of 1,600 at M.A.T.C. , where a day-long "Environmental Teach-In" was in progress. (What wasn´t publicized was the fact that there was a group of Chippewa Indians protesting at the Teach-In because of Nelson´s co-sponsorship of a bill which would make the Apostle Island area a national park. One-half of this land area belonged to their tribe. Despite that, it became a national park in 1970.) A group of UWM students set up a "lemonade" stand downtown and offered 5 cents to anyone brave enough to drink their "lemonade", which was in fact water obtained directly from the Milwaukee River. At Marquette University, students held a "Mass for the Earth".

According to a Milwaukee Journal article that day, ultra-conservatives declared that Earth Day was a plot by the International Communist Conspiracy since April 22 was also the 100th anniversary of Lenin´s birthday. And yet George Wallace, who at first denounced the environmentalists as "freaks" and "extremists", suddenly seemed to reverse his attitude when he called conservationists to Montgomery, Alabama in order to consult with them on his first official environmental policy statement.

Official endorsers of Earth Day 1990 include Senator Herb Kohl, Congressman Jim Moody, the Wisconsin Humane Society, Poly-Anna Plastic Recycling, and Aveda, Inc. Aveda, which makes high quality hair care products, does not test on animals and is the festival´s first official corporate sponsor.

If you have any questions regarding the fundraising activities, the event itself, or are interested in volunteering, please call the Milwaukee Earth Day Coalition at 263-5760.

Beth Heinecamp

The Earth may be thought of as a Deity; as that which sustains and nurtures us.

THE NEW TRIBE

People have been congregating in cities for thousands of years, but cities have been changing so much over that time that we have found that we are still far from being properly adapted to that environment. One result of urbanization is that tribe and community can no longer have the same meaning. We have developed organizations and associations as substitutes for the tribe, but they are shallow in comparison to the social structure that they have replaced.

As city dwellers, we may fall into the same pattern in our pagan relationships. I think that this would be unfortunate. Forming a community on a deeper basis is something that we should consider. By developing pagan social structures we would benefit as a community and personally. I do not expect that this would be an easy thing to do, but I do see that it is a prize well worth pursuing.

As we leave the Age of Pisces and enter the Age of Aquarius, the time is right to begin such an experiment. We are moving into an age where groups of all sizes will begin to experiment with new ways of interaction.

If we examine patterns of change in the world at large, we can begin to see some of the aquarian principles that we can apply to the forming of a new tribalism in an urban environment. Coercion is being supplanted by cooperation as a unifying tool. Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., both minor aquarian messiahs, were pioneers in establishing this pattern. They came forward armed only with love for all concerned and proved that it was possible to erode the will of their oppressors. On the political scene we see the crumbling of the Soviet and American empires. The world is beginning to understand that victory or security gained through aggression and repression is merely a temporary illusion for the vanquisher and a burden that the vanquished will refuse to bear.

On the national and local scale we see a very vocal minority that is using strong emotional appeals to force legislators to turn fundamentalist values into the law of the land. Their actions are a throwback to the Piscean Age. Pagans and other groups should approach this problem in an aquarian manner. Outright resistance to this minority will strengthen their resolve and cause a protracted struggle. We must find a way to weaken their will to resist "our" social and political agenda.

Many of us in the pagan religions recognize these changes as the beginning of a new age, and this puts us in the position to be leaders in change and transition. Pagan voices will be heard, but will others listen to them? I believe that depends on our ability to be a community. The urban tribe principle is one way that we can prepare to explore the new challenges that the Aquarian Age will pose for all of us.

One of the issues that makes forming a pagan community difficult is the nature of paganism itself. It lends itself to individuality which can prevent us from coming together. We face a paradox of the ages: How do we reconcile the oneness of the individual with the oneness of humanity?

The answer to this question was cleverly planted in the glyph

of the planet Uranus, the modern ruler of the sign of aquarius. The glyph)+(is two soul crescents joined to the cross of matter and the circle of spirit. The crescents (souls) are not directly joined together, but they are held together on the physical plane and in the spiritual realm. This union suggests the concepts of cooperation and tolerance. Through tolerance we must gravitate towards the most rudimentary principles that will unite us, and seek to perceive the triviality of our differences relative to very simple but high principles:

1. Although we may choose to celebrate in different ways, we are all seeking connection with the same divine force.
2. The action of this force is love.

Although I have lived in Milwaukee for a few years, I still consider myself to be an outsider in its pagan community. From my vantage point, I feel a great deal of emotional tension within the community. I have seen very strained and broken relationships between pagans. As a community I feel that we are too small to survive the perpetuation of these tensions and the divisiveness that they cause.

My first experience with a pagan community was in another city. The group was large enough to have several factions. Some of the factions did not approve of the actions of the others, but this did not keep us from getting together several times per year to celebrate. I wouldn't say that we were an urban tribe, but we could talk to each other and that was a start.

We in Milwaukee can make a start towards the goal of community by attempting to heal old wounds. I suggest that we make this healing the center of our next healing rituals. The personal squabbles that I see here sadden me the greatest. It is only by owning up to our responsibility in situations like this that we find healing.

Michael DeVore

I hope to be visiting with you in future issues of The Serpent's Tail and I will be discussing more aspects of forming a pagan community in an urban setting. I also invite you to express your ideas to us. Write in care of The Serpent's Tail with any input you might have.

Paganism: A Wide-Angle Geosynchronous View

"We liked your article", read the reply to my submission, "but we are concerned about your use of the 'P' word". I often forget how inflammatory the word "pagan" is. Rather than attempting to define it, I will try to convey my feelings and observations about being pagan. As a pagan, I find sailing or walking in the woods to be as profound as the wisest words captured in print. By recognizing my connection to the Earth I see how much I resemble other forms of life on the planet. They face many of the same obstacles that I do and teach me clever ways to overcome them.

Three generations of people have been able to see the view of Earth from outer space. When I imagine the blue, green and brown orb enveloped in strands of wind-swept clouds, it is easy for me to accept that this tiny orb in space is really one organism. From that assumption, it is possible to make some very profound statements.

The Gaia Theory, as this is called, clashes strongly with the egocentric nature of humanity. How could Homo Sapiens be the most important species on the planet in such a scheme? Accepting human dominance is like saying that nerve tissue is more important than blood tissue or bone tissue. People have deluded themselves into believing that they function separately from the organism. Pursuing this body/tissue analogy further delivers an even more blistering indictment. In the attempt to take dominion over the Earth, humans act more like parasites or cancer cells than as parts of the body.

As a pagan, I feel that we must do anything that we can to reverse these trends. We must return to our intimate relationship with the fish people, the winged people, the tree people, and the four-legged people if we are to survive.

THE RADICAL NATURALIST
by
the Green Man

Pity the poor green plant. It provides our oxygen, feeds, houses and clothes us, medicates and intoxicates body and spirit; yet we brutalize it mercilessly.

Radical Naturalist axiom one: Money is a prime player in all ecological degradation.

Chemical companies control the majority of food seed production. These companies select and develop hybrid types that perform well with their synthetic fertilizers, insect poisons and herbicides. Of course these plants must be uniform in size and maturity date for mechanized harvest. The part about nutritional value is largely ignored.

Hybrid seed is produced under laboratory conditions. Two different but related plant types are carefully mated to produce offspring with desired characteristics. These hybrid types grow vigorously and produce in volume, but their seed is worthless, being either sterile or producing inferior types. So the only way to get these hybrids is to BUY them.

Farmers for all of human history (except the last 90 years) have relied on plant varieties that are open pollenated: that is, they produce seed true to form year after year. These farmers, in their infinite wisdom, always saved the seeds from their very best plants. In this way they selected types best suited for their climate, their soil, their eating. It's hard to make big money selling open pollenated types because the frugal farmer need buy only once instead of annually.

The propaganda line of the chemical companies is they do so much to improve the quality of our lives. What they really improve is the accounts. Let's put Dow, Union Carbide, Exxon and all the other environmental criminals in their place.

Grow as much of your own food as you can. If that means two pepper plants, well, that's two plants worth not sold by the chemo-hybrid combine. If time is a problem, make growing food a family affair. A family of four working together a few hours every Saturday could maintain one very nice garden.

Mother Earth desperately wants everyone to grow food organically. Those of us who do know that organic techniques are sensible, simple and effective. If you garden or have a lawn and now use chemical fertilizers or insecticides, go right to the library and check out Growing Fruits and Vegetables the Organic Way by Rodale Press. If composting and making manure water seem unpleasant, just ask yourself which you would rather have: cowshit under the fingernails or poisons up the nose.

Grow open pollenated types whenever possible. Organically pro duced, these varieties are often superior to hybrids in flavor and nutritional value. They are also preferred for the home garden as they tend to grow better under stressful conditions and have a prolonged harvest rather than ripening all at once. Open pollenated varieties also need our help. While the agri-chem laboratory geniuses are performing hybrid magic, they are letting open pollenated varieties become extinct. Imagine that, they are so busy copyrighting hybrids they forget to tend the gene mines. These same people are supposed to be feeding humanity.

Sources:

Save Our Seeds, Inc.
3533 23rd Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55407-2440

S.O.S. has a nice selection of open pollenated types suitable for Wisconsin's climate. Send for catalogue.

Heirloom Gardening
Old World Wisconsin
S103 W37890 Hwy. 67
Eagle, WI 53119

Heirloom gardens are on display. A garden fair will be held August 25 and 26. Admission required. Seed also available. Write for information.

SACRIFICE: *THE DEAD AND RISEN GOD*

Spring is always a special time when the dull, mottled hues of winter give way to more vibrant colors to stimulate our senses and reawaken us. The yellowish brown grass of last summer, long crushed beneath the weight of winter´s snow, begins to bend its sheaves skyward and take on a gown of the most vibrant green. In Italian, the name for spring is *la primavera*, which means the first green. But in order for this first green to become so brilliant, there must be sufficient moisture given to the plants from the dying of the snow and the numerous rainy spring days. It is on these days, when the sky is somber and everything is weeping long rivulets of raindrops, that one begins to get the sense of something dying before it can be reborn again in all its full splendour.

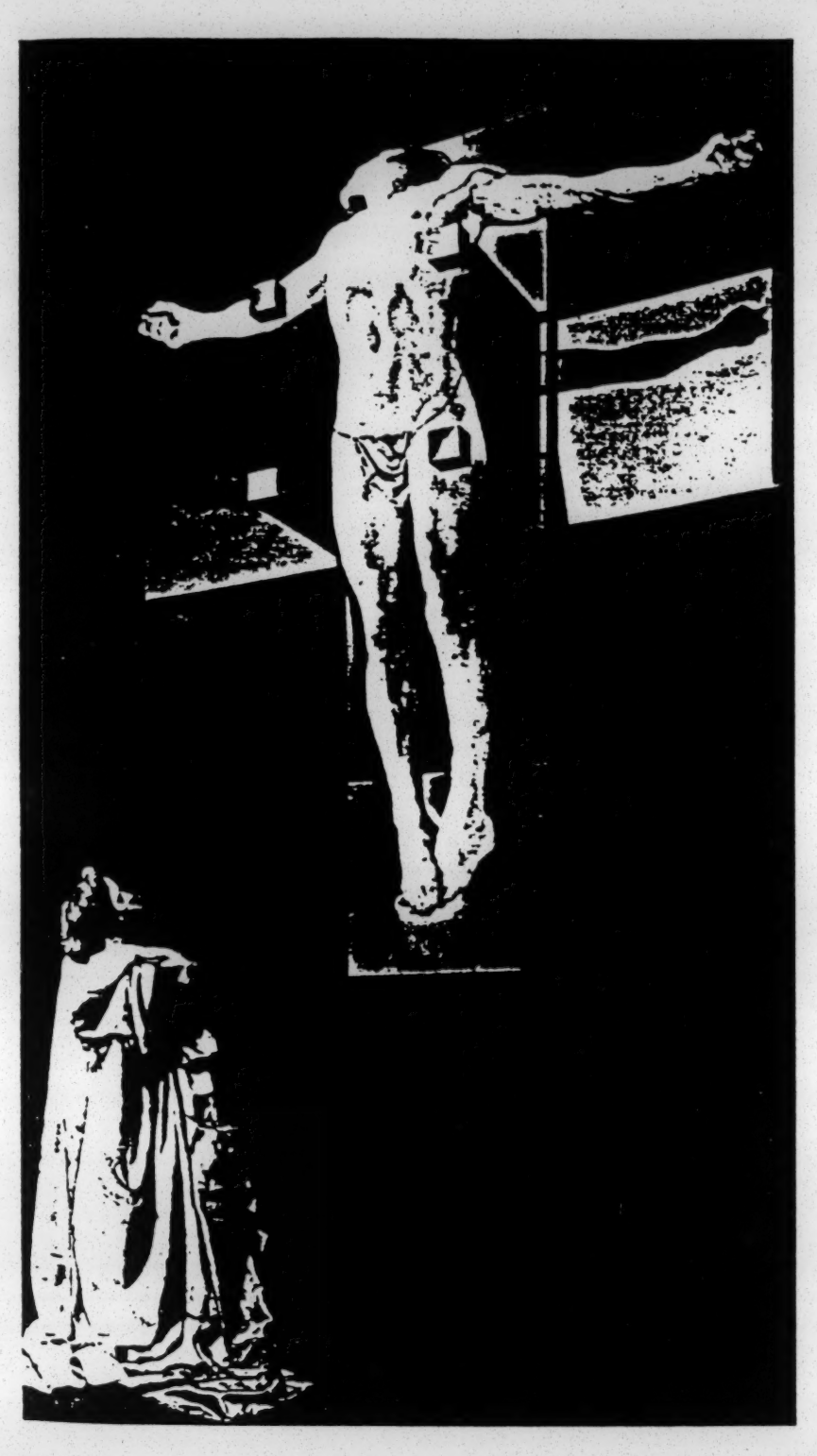
It is also at this time of year that ancient peoples reenacted the annual seasonal cycle of the growth and decay of vegetation, which was bound up with the maturing and decline of living creatures and the waning and waxing cycles of the sun and moon. These rites of spring were enacted as a form of sympathetic magic, to mimic what was going on in the macrocosm in order to put themselves in accordance with it. The Nature Energies that were affecting the animal and vegetable world were later personified into human deities and people supplanted the seasonal cycle of change with corresponding gods. Thus came the idea of a god who represents the principle of life who gives of his own flesh and spills his own blood so that life would return

again and he would be raised from the dead. This is also exactly the idea behind the serpent's tail as a symbol of life feeding on itself in order to be reborn.

Everywhere throughout the ancient world we have the myths and rituals dedicated to the deaths and resurrections of Tammuz, Adonis, Mithra, Attis, Osiris and Christ and of their various animal representations such as bulls, fish and lambs. We still have maintained the carnival games of the Whitsuntide Louts, Green Georges, Jack-in-the-Greens, John Barleycorns, Carrying-out-Winter, Bringing-in-Summer rituals which are still practiced in many parts of Europe and inherited from their ancient pagan traditions. The Christian church has also continued this idea in its mythology of the Fall and Redemption, Crucifixion and Resurrection and the symbolic eating of the Flesh and drinking of the Blood.

Some of the Algonquin and Polynesian myths that correspond to this theme are explored by Joseph Campbell, the renowned mythology historian, in his book The Power of Myth. In the Algonquin myth, a boy sees a man with green plumes on his head who invites him to a wrestling match. He keeps winning and is finally told to kill the plumed man and bury him. The boy does as he is told and soon a beautiful maize plant springs up where the plumed man had been buried.

In the Polynesian myth, a young girl is bathing in a pool where a great eel is also swimming around brushing her thigh. One day, he turns into a man and becomes her lover and visits her several times. Finally, he tells her to cut off his head and bury it, from which eventually grows a coconut tree with its head-shaped nuts.



The Crucifixion, Salvador Dali (1904-1989)

The myth of Christ coming to the world in human form and dying on the cross is representative of the Spirit made into the Flesh; that the Divine is manifested through the Material and the two are not separate as we have come to believe. When one comes into the world of Space and Time and takes on a body, one is condemned to suffer because of the demands of food, clothing, shelter, sex, etc. That all life is suffering is one of the Noble Truths of the Buddha, from which he consequently asks us to "Joyfully participate in the Sufferings of the World." The same is true of the Christ figure because he is the symbol of the Divine's eagerness to take Form in the infinite display that we call the world. We experience our own suffering through him and find ourselves cleansed. Inspired by the Persian mystic, Rumi, poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen wrote :"Oh bless the continuous stutter, of the word being made into flesh....."

Other examples of this theme of the Dead and Risen God can be traced to Babylonia, where the god appears as Tammuz, who is the young spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great Mother Goddess and embodiment of the creative powers of nature. Every year Tammuz was believed to have died and descended to a gloomy underworld where his divine mistress would try to find him. (Notice the connection between Ishtar seeking the dead Tammuz and Isis seeking the dead Osiris in the Egyptian mythology.) During her absence, everything ceased to grow and no reproduction took place. A messenger was sent to rescue the Goddess and the stern queen of the infernal regions reluctantly allowed Ishtar to return with Tammuz to the upper world so that nature could be revived. Tammuz´s death was mourned to the shrill music of flutes and hymns were chanted over an effigy of the dead god. His body was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe while incense fumes rose into the air in order to stir him from his sleep of death.

The Greeks borrowed the practice of worshipping Tammuz from the Semitic peoples of Babylonia and Syria who had changed his name to Adonis, meaning "lord". In the Greek mythology, Adonis is a handsome youth beloved by Aphrodite. In his infancy, the Goddess hid him in a chest, which she put Persephone in charge of. Persephone was the Queen of the Nether World and when she opened the chest and saw how beautiful the baby was, she refused to give him back to Aphrodite. The Goddess of Love also went down to the Underworld like Ishtar and Isis did in order to ransom her dear one from the power of the grave. The dispute was finally settled by Zeus, who decreed that Adonis should abide with Persephone in the Underworld for one part of the year and with Aphrodite the rest of the year. In the end, the fair youth was killed by a wild boar and bled to death while Aphrodite was stricken with grief. A monument to this event exists in a Syrian cliff where the carved figures of Adonis and Aphrodite show the grief-stricken mother/lover and a recess in the rock where he is to have been buried. Red anemones,representing his sacred blood, bloom every year and bathe the mountainside in scarlet.

This scene reminds me of the various depictions of the Pieta where Mary is lamenting the death of Jesus and holding him in her lap. It also brings to mind the cave in which he is to have been buried and I´m sure the flower called the bleeding heart has some connection with the blood of Christ.

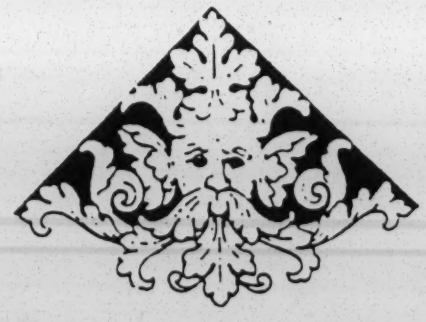
The Resurrection of Osiris

Now we come to the Roman tradition which is the last one before it became absorbed into the Christian mythology with which we are the most familiar. In fact, the similarities between the two mythologies are very striking. The young male consort or son of the Great Mother or Magna Mater was called Attis. He is said to have been driven mad by the jealous Mother Goddess and, in his frenzied state, castrates himself under a pine tree and dies. The Cybele, which is the name of the Mother Goddess, mourns the death of Attis so violently that he returns to life and is reunited with her. Thus he represented triumph over death and the rebirth and renewal of life.

His triumph was celebrated in a cycle of holidays that began on the 15th of March with a solemn procession of the "reedbearers" who commemorate Attis´ infancy when he was abandoned in the reeds on the bank of Gallus River and saved by Cybele.(Adonis, put into a chest by Aphrodite, Moses, found in the rushes). On the day of the Spring Equinox, a pine tree was cut down in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele where it was treated as a symbol of Attis. The trunk was swathed like a corpse with woolen bands and decked with wreaths of purple ribbons and violets, for violets were to have sprung from the blood of Attis much like the roses and anemones sprung from the blood of Adonis and the corn and coconuts grew from the buried men. The tree is brought in procession with the effigy of Attis and laid to rest in the temple of the Magna Mater.

Attis is mourned with loud cries and lamentations and on the Day of Blood, the 24th of March, devotees would cut themselves and sprinkle blood over the sacred tree. During the "sacred night" of the 24th, certain devotees of the Goddess, carried away by their emotion, would perform self-castration in order to imitate Attis´ act of emasculation. (This also corresponds to Isis´ bringing of Osiris´ sacred penis back to the rest of his body so that he could live again.) These newly-initiated priests would ironically be called "galli" (roosters) and dressed conspicuously in long gowns, mitras on their heads, masses of jewelry and hair grown long and bleached like a woman´s. Most Romans thought this practice rather strange and it was later banned.

On the 25th of March, which was reckoned the vernal equinox, (and also the day of Mary´s Annunciation) sorrow had given way to joy , a light shone through the darkness, the tomb was opened, the God had risen from the dead and the divine resurrection was celebrated with glee.



When we compare the Spring Rites of Attis to the Christian Easter story, we can see many similarities. Both are bound to a pine tree or a cross which becomes the main symbol for the God and his suffering. Attis' pine tree is covered with purple violets which represent his life-renewing blood and Crucifixes on Easter Sunday are often depicted with purple shrouds. Christians drink the blood of Christ and eat his body in the sublimated form of wine and wafers so that they may be reborn anew to the Spirit. The ancient Romans would sacrifice a bull or lamb and be purified by their cleansing blood. Sometimes the goat would take on all the sins of the village and be driven into the wilderness. Thus we often hear of Jesus as being called the "lamb of God" and those that take the blame are often called "scapegoats". Both mythologies speak of a rebirth or resurrection (Latin meaning "to stand up again") of life and the triumph out of death.

So, the next time you go to a Good Friday service on a rainy spring day, think of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis and Attis and how they were able to be reborn after death just as Winter gives way to Spring and we too are resurrected into newborn activity after a long winter's rest.

Karin Lorenz Clark

OSTARA: RISE AND SHINE--
THE SNOW QUEEN
IS HAVING FECUND THOUGHTS

Ostara, or Eostre, a teutonic fertility goddess, lends her name to Eostar, "Easter" and the beginning of the Spring season. We remember her at the Vernal Equinox (March 20-21) with common and powerful symbols of the generative forces: eggs and rabbits.

In many cultures of the world, eggs are representative of birth and creation. The ovum, so much like the seed, contains the generative blueprint for us and many of our fellow creatures: a self-contained nurturing and protective system.

The hare is an Egyptian (among other) symbol of springtime and fertility. A prolific breeder, the March hare or cute (chocolate or carob, maybe?) bunny rabbit represents fertility and sensuality.

Working with these symbols to celebrate Ostara can be a time of empowerment to get ideas and plans in motion. As March, the Aries time, is the astrological beginning of the zodiacal calendar, we can approach the Vernal Equinox as the time of transformation that it is: not only are the day and night of equal length on this day, but the rebirth of the Spring is officially nigh and the warmth is coming in the days of lengthening sun. We welcome the spring maiden back from her underground resting place. It is no longer a time for hibernation and dormancy, but the time for activity and creativity to return.

To help us put our energy into motion and use this time as our own seed time, paint hard-boiled or blown eggs with symbols you choose to represent that trait or situation that you most want to receive guidance from or invite into your life. Concentrate on your intention to bring about a change or strike a new balance in your life, and fashion your desire in whatever symbols and colors feel right or otherwise appeal to you.

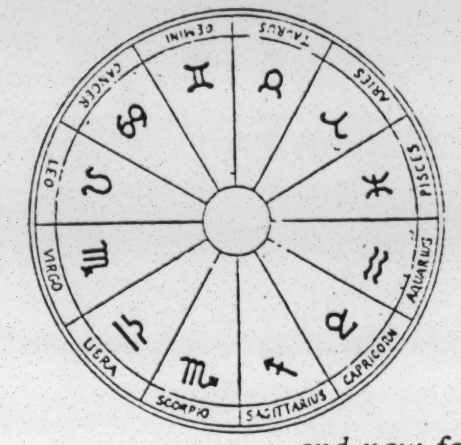
The Pysanky, or Ukrainian egg, is an art of ancient tradition carried forward from pre-Christian times. The rich symbolism still imparted through the designs has its roots in universal pagan symbols of the sun, continuity and eternity, rebirth (the archetypical dying and risen god), life and fertility.

To make colored eggs, you may want to try natural dyes like yellow onion skin, beet juice, and purple grape juice, as well as many varieties of plants. The colors are more interesting than the store bought tablet varieties. Also, by coloring the eggs with your own nature-derived dyes, you boost your intentions by imparting more of your magical essence (along with the plant's) into what you create.

Then, according to your own inner voice and guided by your intention, keep your egg to meditate or scry on its purpose; or give the egg away to put out the call for your desire; or bury the egg as a "seed" to generate that which you requested.

Let the spirit of the new spring move you. Open your heart to receive the regenerative influences of the maiden Spring. This can be the best possible of fertile beginnings, so nurture that which you sow...

Merry Be
MB



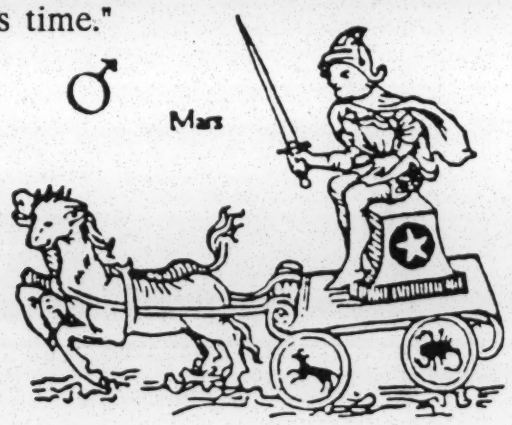
As the Wheel Turns

Astro Advice

and now for a word from J. Merlin.....

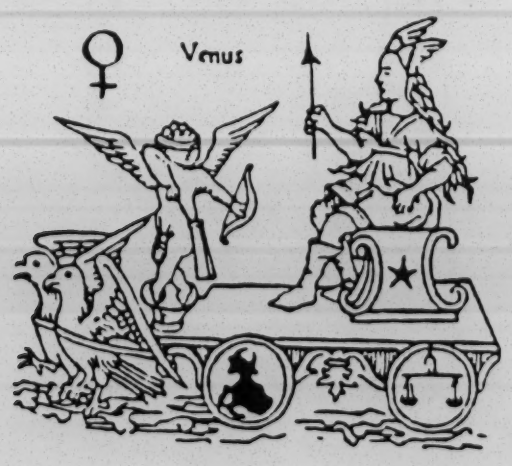
Aries (March 21-April 20)

"Ariens will find themselves making difficult decisions on the job and in the home. No relief until the 14th of April. Conditions could turn red during the full moon on April 10th, so use caution. Be prepared to make concessions on or around the 25th. Financial situation will change for the worse on the new moon so you might have to watch your spending. Ariens may find themselves thinking of traveling on the full moon in June. You may experience good luck at this time."



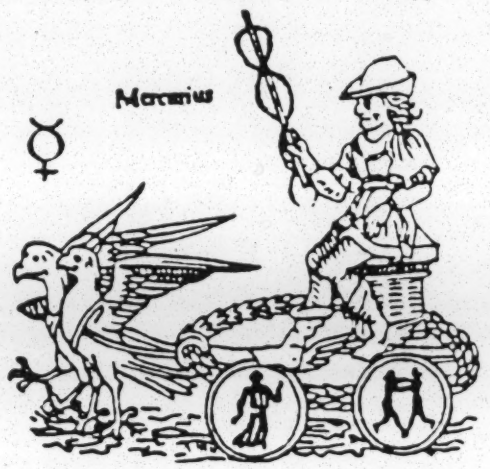
Taurus (April 21-May 21)

"Taureans will continue to experience good luck in business deals. Watch your finances and guard against thefts and potential upsets. Trust your instincts, especially around the new moon in April. Drive with care, accidents are just waiting to happen. Auto repair bills may occur from the beginning of May to the 18th. Partner's financial picture will change on or around the 9th. Financial picture may seem brighter at the beginning of June than it was in May."



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

"Geminis may experience frustration trying to accomplish their goals this spring. Minor obstacles constantly get in the way. Beware of hasty decisions concerning work and home. You may find peace around April 10th and could possibly receive a windfall. Make a wish, it could come true. Financial opportunities increase in May. Beware of secret enemies, they may cause turbulance. Good news around the 24th of May concerning parent or home. Travel plans are in the making which may be changed on June 8th."



Cancer (June 21-July 20)

"Cancers will also find themselves making decisions they won't want to, particularily in the realm of house and work. Much stress around the 26th of March. Very intense for the next thirty to sixty days until the 4th of April. Follow your instincts on financial matters on the 25th. Cancers will experience high degrees of energy which should be used wisely. May receive inheritance or benefits through partner. Should have auto checked out or worked on before April 20, 1990. Will have desire to spend money during May. If you didn't have your car looked at before April 20th, wait until May 20th before you have it looked at if you can."

Leo (July 21-August 20)

"Leos will come up with great ideas but with little time to spend on them. Romance will be highlighted on April 10th but won't be very lucky at this time. Don't take chances! You may be thinking about buying a house on the new moon. High degrees of nervous energy at this time. Follow your instincts near June 8th."

Virgo (August 21-September 20)

"Natural instincts will be keen and you should follow them; they could be prosperous. Health improves in April. May get new job with more money but may not feel secure until the 25th of April. You may discover your worst enemy is yourself. Secrets get unveiled. Be careful of theft or burglary. Problems arise on May 24th due to wasting of resources. Sense of security returns late in May. Watch for egotistical trends in early June."

Libra (September 21-October 20)

"Hard time this spring, hard decisions to make in all major areas of interest. This influence will last for quite some time; make adjustments with no major delays. Relationship or marriage may go through changes around April 10th. You may get your wish this month. You may also recieve something in the mail or off the telephone that will benefit this month. If you are seeking new relationships, you could find it when the Sun goes into Gemini. Changes concerning travel arrangements come on June 8th."

Scorpio (October 21-November 20)

"Transformation of the ego continues to occur. Job opportunities may open for you this spring. This could be Scorpio's lucky spring and summer. Confrontations and decisions in April concerning home life. May 9th may bring changes in home, perhaps separation or divorce. Deepest feelings may come to the surface."

Sagittarius (November 21-December 20)

"Attitude adjustments around the 21st of March. Lots of nervous energy. Rebellious nature directed at authoritative figure. Opportunity for relationships to develop at the full moon on April 10th. Discover secret enemies starting the 21st of April. By the new moon in May things will be back to normal; you will know where you stand. Full moon on your Sun in early June will produce an end to legal problems."

Capricorn (December 21-January 20)

"Capricons will still feel rebellious and may suffer a great deal of stress because of this. Trouble in the home. Full moon in April will affect relationships and marriages. May also produce stress concerning public. Later on in April you may receive raise or promotion which may alleviate pressure at home. Decisions concerning home and career should be delayed."

Aquarius (January 21-February 20)

"Most Aquarians will want to escape responsibility, but this attitude will only produce stress. Opportunities to meet new friends and romantic interest on the 26th. Aquarians may be in public eye. Be careful with finances. On the 10th of April relationships may change for the better. Resources will change on the new moon. Be careful of robbery or theft in May. Younger family member may offer insight; take advantage of it. Legal problems may occur in June. Seek legal advice if necessary."

Pisces (February 21-March 21)

"Pisces people could experience a great deal of luck this spring. Be careful of quick decisions. Guard resources during April, be aware of false sense of security. Secrets will be revealed around the 21st--they may cause upsets which will bring change. Relationship will end as you know it. Instincts will be very keen at this time. Be aware of stress around the 8th of June as instincts will not be sharp so don't depend on them."

THE MUSE´S CORNER

The Offering

....and the Priestesses knew
that they needed a sacrifice,
an absorber for the sorrow of the
world.
The goats and lambs were not
sufficient to carry
this burden
for they were animals
and knew not of human chains
and knew not where to run
except outside the village.
What they waited for was the
Messiah, the Salvador, The One
Who Would Come
at the turning of the Millenium
whose heart left nothing to
steal.
For they said,
"Who will take on this sorrow?
Whose heart is as wide as one
hundred valleys
Whose lap can swallow the blood
of the world
Who can uphold these brittle
nerves of humanity
Who can contain this flesh?
Who will atone for the ones
who have torn everything they
have loved
Whose hearts became a sepulchre
whose passion turned to bone.
What will they do with this one
who is ready?
Upon a cross they will bear him
and make him into a five-pointed
Star
with one head to the
Heavens
and two legs to stand upon the
Earth
and two arms to embrace
those who drove the nail.
They will kneel before him and
weep bitterly
until he speaks and says
It is finished
and stops
the Wheel.
How will they leave this man?
He will have scars with
rivers of wine
and bruises on his body
of bread.
They will come to eat
of his corpus
and drink
of his blood.
On a silver table they will lay
the washen linament
and come before him
the hungry multitudes
in holy sacrament.
They will eat of this man
and bow their heads
in Holy Communion
and raise a white cloth
with which
to wipe their mouths.

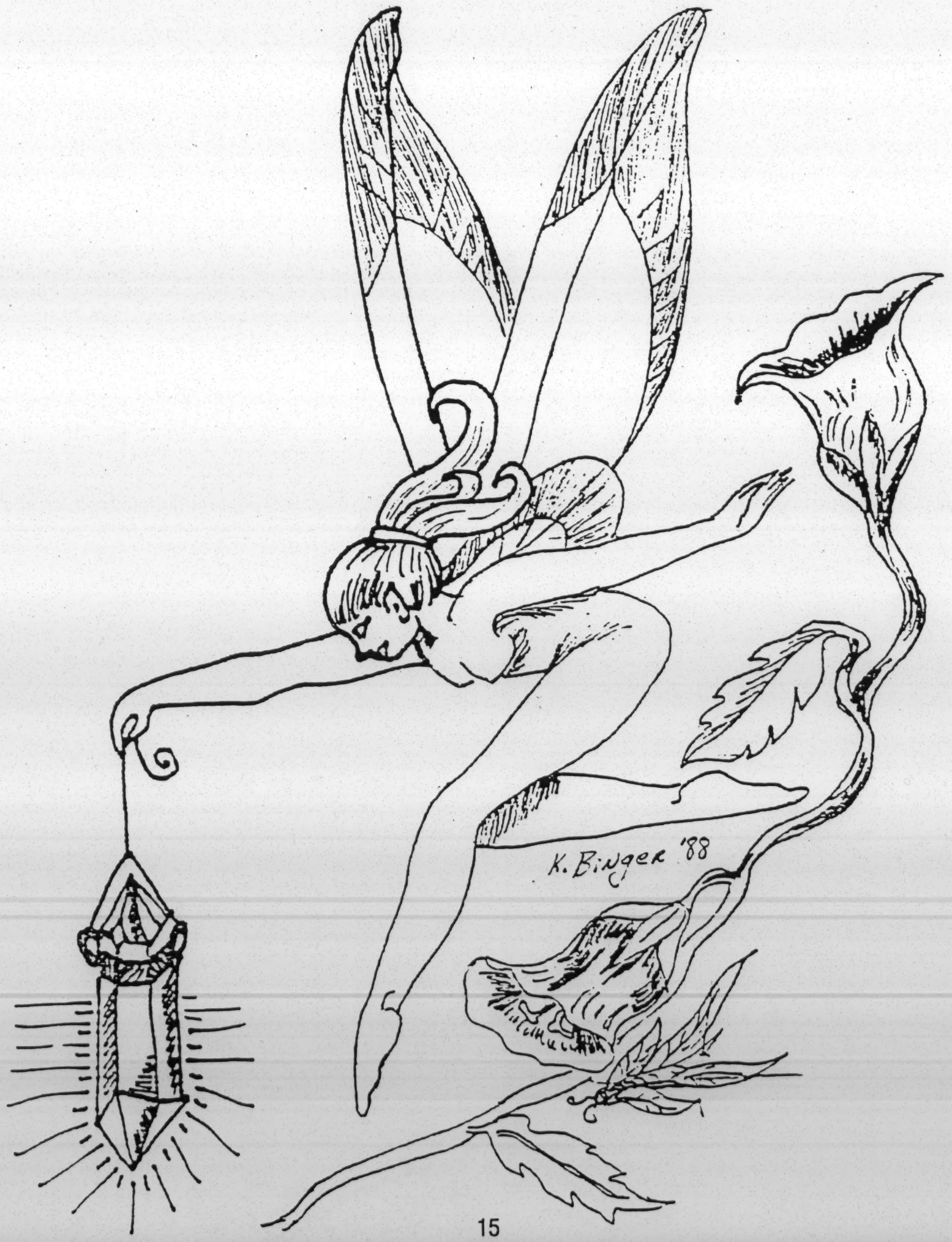
Karin Lorenz

Ode to Adonis

Adonis flames the maiden´s heart
with wind-swept hair of
flaxen hue.
Wind so soft of silk caress
the maiden of the morning dew,
seeking the arrows of Cupid´s bow
such as spun in the dreams
of Spring.
And Adonis, the child
of Winter Solstice
has grown straight and strong
ready to take his place beside
the maiden of the morning dawn
"I name you Adonis," said she
"fair-haired youth of love
and light
for you are the Sun
that brings warmth
I am that which is warmed by you
I am the beauty of Green Earth
and the Moon in the night sky.
Joined as one we bring life
to the land."
And you,my lady of a thousand
names
I give another to you
for you are the Lady of Darkness
and of Light
I name you Isakaru.
The hills trembled and fierce
winds blew at the sound of the
word, and the lady smiled
and all was calm, for she was
the most startled to
hear her sacred name
"Truly, my love, you hold
the key to my heart
Gladly through the seasons
will I be bound to you."

Denise Volzka

Beltane Greetings!



Multiple Maypole Mutations

Many of us are familiar with the symbol of the maypole and its colorful streaming ribbons and flowers. What a lot of people don't know is that the maypole is actually a phallic symbol and connected to the ancient Celtic celebration of Beltane. This fertility festival was celebrated on May 1st and honored the flowering of nature by driving the maypole into the ground to stimulate the growth of the crops in the coming summer season. In many parts of Europe this festival is still celebrated in much the same way along with a May Queen who represents the fresh youthfulness of nature in her season of full blooming. The overtly sexual act of driving the maypole into the ground has become sanitized (probably due to the Christian fear of sexuality) and the true meaning of the festival has been largely sublimated and forgotten. However, since The Serpent's Tail is dedicated to creating the new myths and restoring the old ones to their original intentions, we would like to explore the many transformations the maypole went through before reaching its present incarnation.

Its earliest origins may have been related to the Celtic god Cernunnos, the horned god who was associated with the Oak Tree, symbol of the waxing year. It is believed that the 180-foot tall "Cerne" giant which is carved into a hillside in Dorsetshire, England was a representation of the god-force with its erect penis and brandishing a club. For centuries, May Day rites were performed inside the giant, perhaps inside the godhead itself and the Maypole may have replaced the earlier tradition of these fertility rites. Thus the Maypole in its earlier form was much taller and without ribbons. It was crowned with a ring of flowers symbolizing female fertility. (Incidently, in parts of Germany today, the young girls of the village sit on the ring itself during the May Day celebrations.)

Another event that accompanies the dance around the Maypole is the Godiva (Goddess) procession which is still reenacted in England today. The Godiva is not the later desexed version that we are so familiar with but was a respresentative of the Spring Maiden and the flowering of life. In olden times, she rode her horse naked without shame before she was covered with long flaxen hair and a pink body suit. In the early 70's, some brave women decided to ride naked again in the Godiva procession but they still needed the protection of long wigs. The girl chosen to be the Godiva was usually a teenager who was chosen for her good behavior and to be allowed to ride nude was considered an honor among the other girls. Her companions scattered flowers over the bystanders and in some places she was preceded by an old woman on a black horse. She was the Spring Maiden who drove away the darkness of winter and her freshness of young womanhood gave promise for the blooming of life to come.

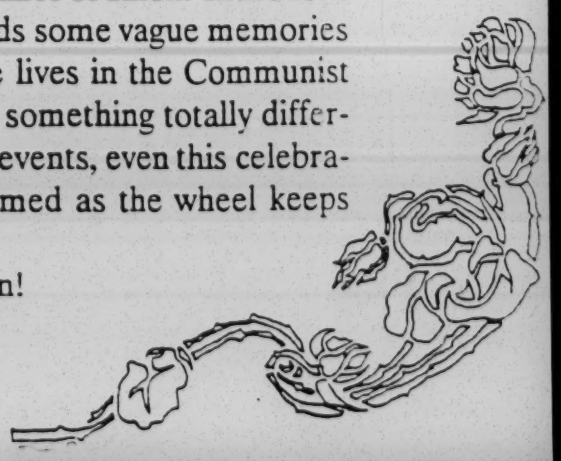
Another interesting coincidence is the fact that Godiva rides into town on a white mare. The white mare is the totem animal of the Celtic Goddess Epona. Her many bas-reliefs included an image of the Goddess lying half-naked on the back of her horse. She was known as the Great Mother and her role as a fertility Goddess was represented by the sheaf of corn in her lap and the cornucopia or goblet in her hand. (The Roman fertility Goddess holds an egg and a rooster in her hands.) Many believe that the White Horse of Uffington in England which is also cut into the vast countryside and seen from the air like the Cerne giant is also a worshipping place of the Goddess Epona. Hence there may be a connection between the white mare of the fertility Goddess Epona and the white mare of the Springtime Maiden.

Another figure that still takes part in the modern day Maypole festivals is a man called Jack-in-the-Green who rides a horse and is covered from head to foot in plants and flowers. He is obviously a representation of the flowering of life and is later transformed into John Barleycorn who must die when the autumn winds begin to blow. The Maypole dance and Godiva processions may also have links with the hobbyhorse dances the mummers performed where the Spring Maiden is presented to the sacred penis in the statement that flowers are meant for fruiting.

In all these rituals, human representatives demonstrated openly the displays of sexual magic and wonder without shame. In this sense, sexuality is shown as it should be in its natural form rather than the gross perversions we have become accustomed to. I believe this is due to the fact that we live in a society whose dominant religion denies its dark side, assigns it to "the Devil" and therefore becomes haunted by it in even more menacing aspects. Through these reenactments, ancient peoples put themselves in tune with rather than in opposition to the rhythms of life through the sacred dance of union. In modern times, the first of May holds some vague memories of such festivals or, if one lives in the Communist world, this day represents something totally different. But in light of recent events, even this celebration will become transformed as the wheel keeps turning.

Godiva Rides Again!

Karin Lorenz Clark



Moon Stroke

the elder souls
in white robes glowing
walking across miles
of green grass
towards
the music in the valley

the blue people
hover above
delighted by the intensity of
the life building
electromagnetic energy
projected from
the minstrels
plugged in below

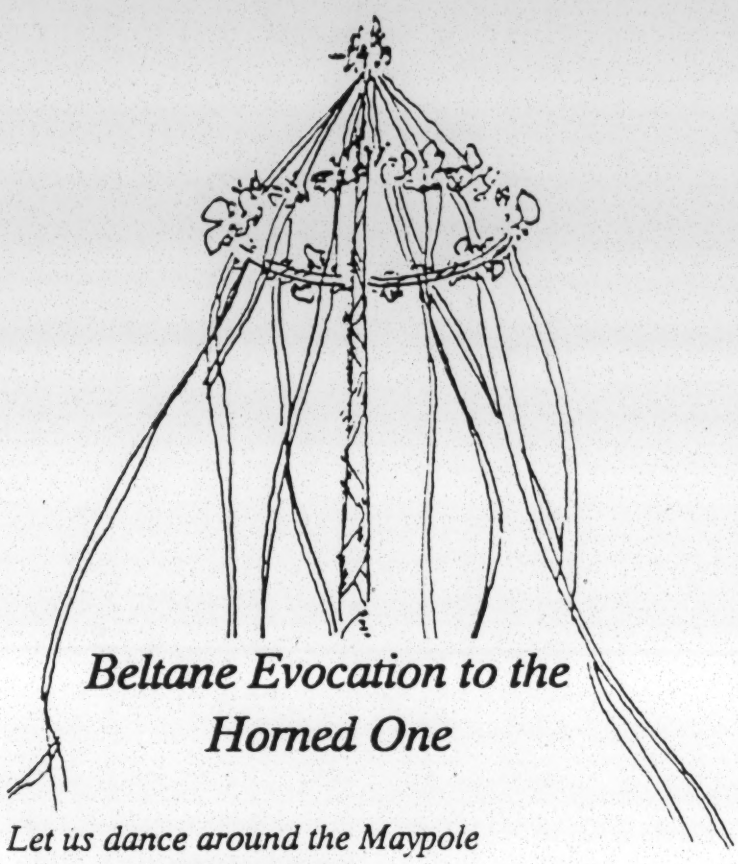
negativity fading
rapidly
beings bathed in
light and sound
rejoicing
in
dance and song

rapid accelaration
as we move
into the twenty-first century
spiritual cataclysm
major upheavals in attitudes
the falling away
of old beliefs
on all planes

sleeping sluggish humans
awaken
from a deep sleep
centuries
of nightmarish behavior
dispelled
at
dawn

Michael Dean Pollock

It seems our publication has gone international. Michael sent us this poem from Rekjavik, Iceland. We hope to hear from more Icelanders! Thank you! *(Editor's Note)*



Beltane Evocation to the Horned One

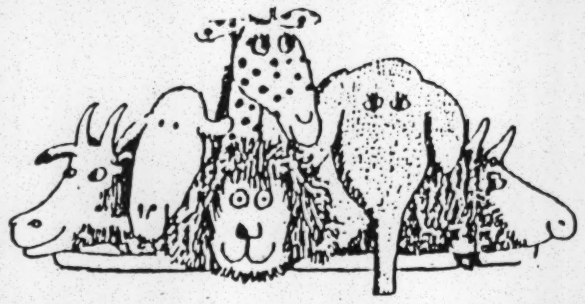
Let us dance around the Maypole
thrust into Mother Earth
Come weave the Phallic Temple
bringing Her to birth.

We spawn the life force naked
that from this column comes
Into Flesh is manifest
the Thought is caught in Form.

Let the strength return
to the stem of your being
to the egg of your womb
and through our renewed bodies
Godiva rides again!

Karin Lorenz Clark

HOME PLANET HEALING AND AWARENESS FESTIVAL



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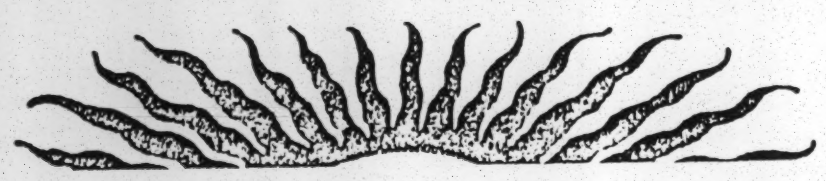

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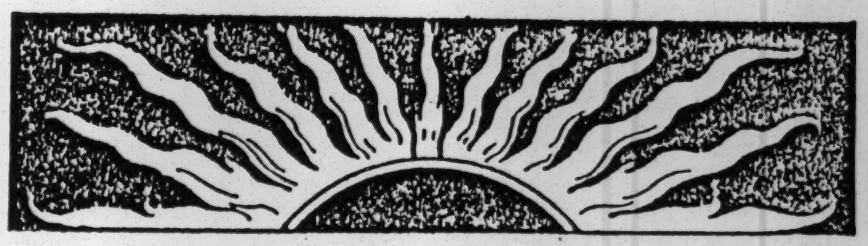
1) duplicate this flyer and pass it down the grapevine
2) pre-register ASAP and reserve your campsite/display*
3) decide what you can offer and put it on your registration form (below)

---

*Craftsfolk are encouraged to barter, trade, or sell their products. All participating organizations have the right to hand out literature, pro-mote their perspective, give demonstrations, or hold discussion groups. BRING YOUR OWN DISPLAY TABLES TO BE SET UP AT YOUR CAMPSITE .....

We are expecting an attendance of 300-500 individuals at this UNIQUE event. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you PRE-REGISTER before the camping space is sold out (max. 500). We al-so need to begin coordinating workshops, demonstrations, and discussion circles. Please put considerable thought into what you can offer. Everyone attending will do a 3-hour stint at COMMUNITY WORK (see registration form) as part of their admission costs. Folks should understand that PLANET-FEST'90 will be a VILLAGE-SIZED gathering. Outhouses and solar showers are provided. Drinking water and firewood will be on site for your use. A series of camping circles are available for specific use (see registration). There are miles of woodland trails, a natural amphitheatre and stage, council and workshop circle spaces, a group kitchen area, and cooking grates on individual campfires. BYO FOOD and CAMPING GEAR!



THE PLANETARY BIOSPHERE OPERATES AS ONE UNIT. IMBALANCE IN ONE AREA SOON SPREADS TO ANOTHER. CREATING BALANCE DOES LIKEWISE. THE CHOICES ARE CLEAR. WE MUST CHOOSE TO HONOR BALANCE AND BECOME CONSCIOUS OF OUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. WE NEED TO BECOME AWARE OF ALTERNATIVES. CIVILIZATION IS GO-ING INTO ITS MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD. AS IT STRUGGLES TO EMERGE INTO ADULT-HOOD, NEW PERSPECTIVES ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOME PLANET ARE CALL-ED FOR. PLANET-FEST WILL SHIFT THE NEGATIVE PATTERNS TOWARDS A POSITIVE & PRACTICAL SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE. YOU CAN BE A PLAN-MAKER TOO !!!

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b. 75% to EARTH-BASE PROJEX, Incorporated - to be used to fund EARTH-BASE #1 - a model closed-circuit self-sustaining eco-village demonstrating the practicality of non-polluting and energy-efficient technologies for use by New Earth Communi-ties and environmentally concerned individuals - SEND a $3 DONATION for a complete copy of the EARTH-BASE FOUNDATION PAPERS (which lay out the plans and procedures for E.B.P.)
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PLEASE SUBMIT

articles, poems, essays, invocations, recipes, chants, letters to the editor, etc.

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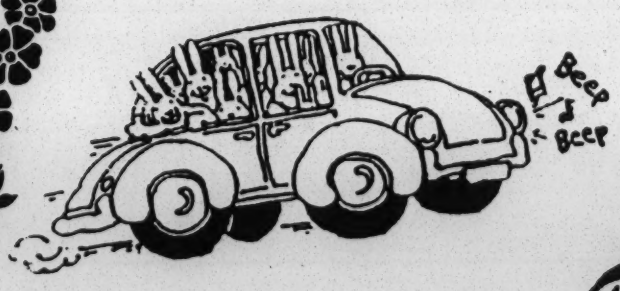

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